F.Y.I.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Annual Wage Survey Results Released

Idaho's estimated average hourly wage in 2005 was $16.12, up 3 percent from 2004, according to Idaho Commerce & Labor's 2006 Occupational Employment & Wage Survey. Results are now available both in print and on the agency's Web site. Information on how to access the report is provided at the end of this article. The annual survey compiles wage data collected from employers for 22 major occupational groups representing data for an estimated 584,580 workers.

Wage increases is another sign that the state has rebounded from the loss of jobs during the state's economic slowdown.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Boise City Metropolitan Statistical Area — Ada and Canyon counties — had the highest average wage of $17.24 an hour, a 2.7 percent increase from 2004.
- Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area — Bannock County — had the largest percent increase from 2004 at 6.5 percent. Wages rose from $14.57 to $15.52 in 2004.
- South central Idaho saw its wages increase by 4.5 percent to $15.24 an hour.
- Wages in eastern Idaho, excluding the Pocatello MSA, were up 2.5 percent from 2004 to an average wage of $15.79 an hour.
- Northern Idaho (includes 10 counties) reported that wages increased 2.5 percent to an average wage of $15.10 per hour.
- Wages in southwestern Idaho, excluding the Boise City MSA, remained relatively flat, increasing by six-tenths of a percent to $14.34 per hour.

Reading the Publication

The publication consists of the three sections.

- **Introduction:** provides job and data definitions, describes the survey methodology used and provides information on how to interpret and use the wage information provided in this publication.
- **Wage Tables:** includes wage tables for six geographic areas and a cross regional index. The state of Idaho table provides data based on all 44 Idaho counties. The northern Idaho table provides data based on the ten northern counties. The Boise City Metropolitan Statistical Area table provides data based on Ada and Canyon counties in southwestern Idaho. The southwestern Idaho table, excluding the Boise City MSA, provides data based on ten southwestern counties, excluding Ada and Canyon counties. The south central Idaho table provides data based on the eight counties in that region. The Pocatello MSA table provides data based on Bannock County in eastern Idaho. The eastern Idaho table, excluding Pocatello MSA, provides data on the 15 counties in eastern Idaho excluding Bannock County. In each of these tables, estimated employment, the average (mean), entry, midpoint (median) and middle range wage levels are provided in occupational code order. The last table provides the average or mean wage for each occupation for the state and the six regions.
- **Appendices:** Appendix A provides an alphabetical listing of occupations for locating specific job titles. Appendix B provides the same data as the wage tables but for general and operations managers (code 11-1201) by industry for the state and six regions. Appendix C includes wage data only for occupations in education for the state and six regions.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Web site — www.bls.gov — contains a table for each occupation with employment, mean and median hourly wage, mean annual wage and the mean relative standard error. Only the state, Boise MSA and Pocatello MSA data are available at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site at www.bls.org.. The wage tables for the six geographic regions are available at both the Idaho Commerce & Labor Web site, lmi.idho.gov, and in the state publication. Both the Idaho and Bureau of Labor Statistics Web sites include definitions for all occupations.

There are a few differences between the bureau's and Idaho's Internet data. On the bureau's Web site the data's title includes November 2004, which is the starting data of the survey period, and it has not been aged. Since one-third of the data is collected every year, the current data is adjusted to include prior year information. Idaho has chosen to title the current data by the release date. Idaho also ages the data so that all data collected can be used. More information on this process is found in the publication's definition section.

SOC Classification System

The coding system used to collect and release the data is the Standard Occupational Classification system. This system is used by all federal statistical agencies for

reporting occupational data. The SOC system consists of 821 detailed occupations grouped into 449 broad occupations, 96 minor groups and 22 major groups. The Occupational Employment Statistics program provides occupational employment and wage data at the major group level and detailed occupation level.

Wage Terms

There are four basic terms used in the wage survey.

- **Mean:** a measure of central tendency that represents the sum of the values of the observations divided by the number of observation; it also is known as the arithmetic average or commonly referred to as the average.
- **Median:** a measure of central tendency that is not sensitive to values that are far removed or outlying the others and which have undo effect on the mean. The median represents the value at which one-half of the observations fall below it and one-half are above it and is commonly referred to as the mid-point.
- **Middle range:** a term used to describe the range of wages paid to the middle 50 percent of the workers in a specific occupation. This means that one-fourth of the employees are earning wages below the low end of the middle range and one-fourth of the employees are earning wages above the high end. This range provides the user with information regarding the variance of pay within an occupation. It is a measure of where 50 percent of the wage rates fall.
- **Entry wage:** a term that refers to the average wage paid to those in the bottom third of workers in an occupation. This is an imputed wage measure rather than a surveyed measure.

Pay Ranges

Employers are asked to report their number of employees by occupational classification and by pay range. Only wage and salary-type compensation data are included in the survey results. Fringe benefits costs, overtime, bonuses, incentive pay and other non-wage earnings are not included. The pay ranges are listed on FYI Table 1.

FYI Table 1: Wage Survey Pay Ranges

Range	Per Hour	Per Year
A	Under $6.75	Under $14,040
B	$6.75 - 8.49	$14,040 - 17,679
C	$8.50 – 10.74	$17,780 – 22,359
D	$10.75 – 13.49	$22,360 – 28,078
E	$13.50 – 16.99	$28,080 – 35,359
F	$17.00-21.49	$35,360-44,719
G	$21.50-27.24	$44,720-56,679
H	$27.25-34.49	$44,720-56,679
I	$34.50-43.74	$71,760-90,999
J	$43.75-55.49	$91,000-115,439
K	$55.50-69.99	$55.50-69.99
L	$70.00 +	$145,600 +

Statewide Wage Increase

Not all industries experienced a 3 percent increase in wages from the prior year. Some occupations had a larger increase, some a smaller increase and some even experienced a wage decrease. FYI Table 2 on page 27 shows the 20 occupations with the largest percent increase in wages from 2005. Of those 20 occupations, four are related to education, three are health-related and the remaining are in a variety of occupational groups. The hourly rate for mental health counselors increased 62 percent as the wage rose from $20.64 in 2005 to $33.44 in 2006. These 20 occupations average 490 employees ranging from 30 computer science and foreign language teachers to 2,480 drivers/sales workers. Excluding the four occupations where only annual wage data is available, only three of the remaining 16 occupations rank in the top 20 of the highest-paying occupations — all other physical scientists, architects and mental health counselors.

Occupations with the Lowest Wages

Eleven lower-paid occupations occurred in food preparation and serving. Another three occurred in building and personal care. The wages reported do not include tips which would impact the average wage of food service workers. The average number of workers in these 20 occupations is 3,000 ranging from 90 motion picture projectionists to 14,800 cashiers. The lower-paid occupations generally tend to be larger and have more turnover. FYI Table 3 on page 27 shows the wage changes in the 20 occupations with the lowest pay in 2005.

How to Access the Wage Data

Idaho Commerce & Labor, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, conducted the 2006 Occupational Employment Statistics employment and wage survey from October 2004 through August 2005. The data obtained from this survey is now available in both printed and electronic format. To obtain a printed publication, contact Idaho Commerce & Labor, Public Affairs, 317 W. Main St., Boise ID 83735, (208) 332-3570 ext. 3206 or 1-800-772-2553. Contact the agency by e-mail at jackie.haney@cl.idaho.gov.

The publication can be found online at lmi.idaho.gov. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic's electronic publication can be found at http://stats.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm.

Janell Hyer, Regional Economist Supervisor
317 W. Main St., Boise, ID 83735
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3220
E-mail: janell.hyer@cl.idaho.gov

FYI Table 2: Changes in Wages for Occupations with the Highest Percent Increase

Occupational Title	2006 Average Wage	2005 Average Wage	Percent Change
Mental Health Counselors	$33.44	$20.64	62.0
Education Administrators, Preschool and Child Care Center/Program	$44,191*	$32,014	38.0
Physical Scientists, All Other	$37.85	$28.61	32.3
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers	$13.88	$10.75	29.1
Writers and Authors	$23.14	$18.01	28.5
Driver/Sales Workers	$12.10	$9.52	27.1
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	$19,463*	$15,446	26.0
Financial Specialists, All Other	$21.05	$16.76	25.6
Foreign Language and Literature Teachers, Postsecondary	$52,454*	$41,921	25.1
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	$12.31	$9.88	24.6
Industrial Engineering Technicians	$20.93	$17.00	23.1
Physical Therapist Assistants	$18.17	$14.80	22.8
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	$34.22	$27.98	22.3
Fire Fighters	$18.55	$15.29	21.3
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	$19.45	$16.06	21.1
Medical Assistants	$13.89	$11.49	20.9
Farm workers, Farm and Ranch Animals	$9.95	$8.30	19.9
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	$13.13	$11.00	19.4
Residential Advisors	$11.89	$10.03	18.5
Computer Science Teachers, Postsecondary	$63,008*	$53,194	18.4

* Wages for education-related occupations are provided in annual amounts. All others are hourly wages.

FYI Table 3: Change in Wages for Occupations Paid Less than $8.25 per Hour

Occupational Title	2006 Average Wage	2005 Average Wage	Percent Change
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	$6.66	$6.35	4.9
Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers	$6.77	$7.17	-5.6
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	$6.87	$6.83	0.6
Waiters and Waitresses	$6.88	$6.62	3.9
Bartenders	$6.99	$6.71	4.2
Dishwashers	$7.05	$6.91	2.0
Motion Picture Projectionists	$7.10	$8.13	-12.7
Cooks, Fast Food	$7.10	$7.30	-2.7
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	$7.10	$6.84	3.8
Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products	$7.21	$7.21	0.0
Food Servers, Non-restaurant	$7.30	$7.33	-0.4
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	$7.38	$7.46	-1.1
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	$7.73	$7.45	3.8
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	$7.78	$7.91	-1.6
Cooks, Short Order	$7.88	$7.84	0.5
Child Care Workers	$7.99	$7.92	0.9
Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	$8.00	$7.99	0.1
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	$8.09	$7.77	4.1
Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	$8.16	$8.22	-0.7
Cashiers	$8.19	$8.21	-0.2

REGIONAL BREAKOUT SUMMARY – IDAHO ECONOMIC SYMPOSIUM 2006

Communication between employers and educators on the labor force demands of Idaho's evolving economic future was a dominant topic during the regional sessions that closed out the Idaho Economic Symposium 2006.

"Education is the rigor, and business is the reality," Blaine County School District Superintendent Jim Lewis said.

Nearly 400 people attended Idaho's Economic Symposium 2006 Jan. 31, where the state's economic progress was reviewed with particular emphasis on the important relationship between Idaho's economy, employment and education.

Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne, Idaho Commerce & Labor Director Roger B. Madsen and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor Mason Bishop all delivered messages supporting Idaho's economic strength, employment growth and commitment to education. Keynote speaker and futurist, Ed Barlow of Creating the Future Inc., provided more fodder for discussion, which took place in regional breakout sessions as the symposium's final event.

The following is a synopsis of the discussion that took place at each of the six regional breakout sessions.

REGION 1 – NORTHERN IDAHO

- Participants called for schools, businesses and government to come together to find solutions to the problem of educating today's students for tomorrow's jobs and getting direct advice from business on curriculum decisions.
- They called for high schools to add courses in problem solving, languages and personal finance, agreeing that the technology-rich culture of young people today negates any need for additional computer courses.
- Developing a speaker's bureau of both business people and educators would provide a platform from which students could be made aware of career opportunities and the education required to achieve them.
- Internships from businesses would help achieve the same goal.

REGION 2 – NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

- Participants suggested Idaho Commerce & Labor use its upcoming rural forums to facilitate discussions about the importance of linking education to business needs.
- They called for region-wide collaboration on training and education for health care services, which are comparatively limited in the region that is becoming a Mecca for retirees.
- Inadequate communications and transportation infrastructure was cited as at least one explanation for the region being the least economically active in the state.
- With comparatively sparse population, the region may need subsidies from businesses for community college training in needed skills. The schools currently have the resources to provide the training, but to be financially viable the training must be provided to relatively large class sizes when there are not that many people ready or willing to take the courses.
- Raising awareness of the possibilities of collaboration between the University of Idaho and Washington State University and reducing the competitiveness could create a high-tech corridor between the two schools.
- Retraining programs are needed to maximize the value of the region's labor force that has a higher percentage of post-secondary degrees than any other region in the state.

REGION 3 – SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

- Participants proposed creation of an organization dedicated to keeping open the lines of communication between businesses and educators so employers know the capabilities of their schools while the schools know the needs of their businesses.
- Schools, primarily junior colleges, must respond more quickly to the evolving labor and training needs of businesses, especially small business that can starve to death without quick access to skilled workers needed to expand.
- Charters are becoming effective in educating students who can meet the demands of the new

economy because they have more flexibility to adapt to changing cultural and business circumstances.

- Fees for the community college components of the state's universities and colleges are up to three times higher than the rate affordable by potential students needing those courses.
- The region participants called for full restoration of financial support for the school to work program.

REGION 4 – SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO

- Participants in region 4, concerned that retraining of workers must be put on a par with basic kindergarten through high school education, committed to a fall summit between education and business leaders to define common goals and what is needed to achieve them.
- They want to inject "the human thing" into collaboration between teachers and employers, and they expressed some concern that rigid adherence to testing goals will stifle the kind of innovation that enables education to adapt to the changing labor needs of their region.

REGION 5 – SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

- Participants called for expanded access to education and skill transfer training in rural communities, especially through distance learning programs.
- The lack of broadband access in many areas is inhibiting educational opportunities and could possibly be resolved if public facilities which have broadband in those areas can somehow extend the service to the rest of the communities.
- While mathematics and science education is important and crucial to college attendance, the way those subjects are taught must be changed so that grade school students do not zone out on the subjects and want to pursue them into high school.
- Barriers such as high fees and counsel authorization for student participation in the digital academy must be removed.
- Charter schools are improving and having an impact.
- The belief of parents and other adults that what was good for them in school is good enough for their children is no longer acceptable and must be changed to reflect thinking beyond their experience and planning beyond their future.

REGION 6 – EASTERN IDAHO

- Participants called for more retraining opportunities to help workers caught in the transition of responsibilities at the Idaho National Laboratory and more direct training of students in the technical areas critical to the continued success of the laboratory and its spin-offs.
- Develop strategies, including those making higher education more affordable, that will convince rural students to go on to college and persuade them to stay in Idaho or return to Idaho after graduation to end what the region calls the loss of its labor force future.
- Create mathematics, science and technology camps at facilities like the Idaho National Laboratory, Micron Technology or Hewlett-Packard, to name just three locales, that would make students aware of the fascinating aspects of careers in those sectors and the education needed to achieve them.
- Eastern Idaho Technical College is chronically under funded for worker retraining.
- There is a need to integrate business, education and government to develop new innovative strategies for retraining the current training pools and groom emerging pools.
- Engage business, education and government collectively to solve current and future labor shortages.

Bob Fick, Communications Manager
317 W. Main St., Boise , ID 83735
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3628
E-mail: bob.fick@cl.idaho.gov